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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 VIENNA 000892

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR - KRAMER AND EUR/AGS - VIKMANIS-KELLER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/24/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [CVIS](#) [BO](#) [AU](#) [EUN](#)

SUBJECT: DEMARCHE TO AUSTRIA ON BELARUS TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS

REF: A. STATE 46976

[B](#). VIENNA 785

Classified By: Deputy Chief of Mission Scott F. Kilner. Reason: 1.4 (b) and (d).

[1](#). (SBU) EconPolCouns delivered ref (a) demarche on March 24 to Josef Litschauer, the MFA's DAS-level Director for Eastern Europe. (Note: Political Director Thomas Mayr-Harting was not in Vienna. Ambassador will press these points on March 27 and 28 in meetings with the Chancellor's Diplomatic Advisor and to the MFA's Secretary General. End note.)

Expanding the Travel Ban ...

[2](#). (C) Litschauer said the EU and U.S. are in full agreement that there should be an expansion of travel restrictions. He said the EU and U.S. had already shared their lists with each other, and there is substantial agreement on names. He suggested that there might be a benefit to starting with a subset of the 147 names on the U.S. list, and including new categories to target over time in order to increase the pressure. At the same time, he noted the practical considerations that could slow the implementation of a travel ban on all of the people on our list. We had sufficient information on some entries to permit border agencies to apply a workable ban. However, in many cases, at the moment we only had scant information, such as a family name. More broadly, the travel ban would require approval at EU ministerial level. The next EU ministerial meeting will be on April 10, which does not leave much time fully to complete preparations. We noted, and he readily agreed, that the key was to win political consensus on the measure. If the political will existed to proceed, then we could work out the details.

... to Include Lukashenko?

[3](#). (C) We stressed the importance of including Lukashenko on the travel ban list, emphasizing that there was sentiment in the EU for doing so. We called on Austria to take the lead in winning agreement on this issue. Litschauer said Lukashenko's name was already on the list the 11 EU Chiefs of Mission in Minsk had prepared. (Note: Latvia represents the Austrian Presidency in Minsk. End note.) Litschauer said he was certain Ministers would consider this point in detail. While he was not in a position to commit Austria to pursuing this goal, neither did he close the door on adding Lukashenko to the list. We stressed that "leadership" in this case meant more than simply finding agreement, but rather championing the best position, which would be to extend the travel ban to Lukashenko. We said we would continue to press this point with political levels in the Austrian government.

"Legitimacy" Not an Issue

[4](#). (C) Litschauer agreed fully with our position that the question of a travel ban on Lukashenko had nothing to do with the nature of foreign representation in Minsk. The two issues "have nothing to do with each other."

Family Members a Bridge Too Far -- Unless?

[5](#). (C) Litschauer said there was no support in the EU for extending travel restrictions to family members. "We don't believe in clan punishment," he said. We countered that many family members themselves held government positions. Litschauer readily agreed that such people could in their own right be subject to the travel ban.

Financial Sanctions on Another Track

[6](#). (C) Litschauer reported that the March 22 conference call

had included a discussion of freezing assets of regime officials. He said the U.S. side had indicated that posts would receive instructions for further discussions with Finance Ministries.

McCaw